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COORDINATION QUESTIONS

Annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1991

Addendum

Summary of activities in 1991 of the subsidiary bodies of ACC and of ad hoc bodies convened under its auspices

SUMMARY

The present report contains brief summaries of the activities carried out in 1991 by the subsidiary bodies of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). The activities of certain ad hoc bodies that meet under the auspices of ACC are also described.

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Abbreviations

ACC	Administrative Committee on Coordination
ACCIS	Advisory Committee for the Coordination of Information Systems
CCAQ (FB)	Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Financial and Budgetary Questions)
CCSQ (OPS)	Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities)
CPC	Committee for Programme and Coordination
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GTZ	German Technical Assistance Corporation
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICPF/SARD	International Cooperative Programme Framework for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JUNIC	Joint United Nations Information Committee
NGLS	Non-Governmental Liaison Service
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
UNDCP	United Nations International Drug Control Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRO	Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WHO	World Health Organization

I. TASK FORCE ON LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

1. The twentieth session of the Task Force on Long-Term Development Objectives was held at Geneva from 19 to 22 March 1991. In accordance with the mandate given to the Task Force by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1990/52, entitled "Role of the United Nations in the early identification, analysis and forecasting of world economic developments", the Task Force reviewed current problems and prospective developments in the economic and social fields and considered ways to improve existing mechanisms for disseminating socio-economic forecasts, projections and qualitative analyses in a comprehensive and readily accessible form.

2. The Task Force took note of the report of its Technical Working Group on its fifteenth session, held in July 1990. The Task Force noted that the long-term assessments of the world economy presented by various agencies at that session were still valid, even if their short-term outlooks for 1990 and 1991, influenced by the effects of the Persian Gulf conflict, proved to be too optimistic. The Task Force endorsed the usefulness of the Technical Working Group as a network for exchanging substantive views on methodology, databases, communication and other technical issues of modelling and forecasting, and requested the Working Group to review modelling and other analytical work on social and environmental aspects of development at its next session, which was held in July 1991. At that session, the Working Group also reviewed the compatibility between assessments of trends in agriculture and industry and the macroeconomy produced by different units of the United Nations system, and exchanged views on the methodologies, databases, communication facilities and other technical issues involved in the preparation and dissemination of forecasts, projections and qualitative analyses of trends in the world economy.

3. The Task Force noted that over the past few years entrepreneurship had attracted attention in almost every part of the United Nations system. A number of specialized agencies have programmes, sometimes in cooperation with other agencies, to encourage entrepreneurship in developing countries and countries in transition and in special contexts such as poverty alleviation, agriculture, environmental problems, refugee settlement and health services.

4. The Task Force made recommendations to ACC on the following matters: (a) resource flows for development; (b) promotion of exchange and dissemination of socio-economic forecasts, projections and analyses; and (c) review and assessment of the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.

5. In response to a request by ACC, the Task Force also prepared a paper on the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade by the United Nations system, including the review and appraisal of the implementation, for the Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and ACC, in October 1991.

6. The Task Force is a group of senior officials who meet for a few days once a year or, when circumstances warrant it, twice a year. It lacks decision-making responsibilities or even rules for such decisions, and it has seemed advisable for it not to set its ambitions unrealistically high. Secretariat support is not separately budgeted; the cost of servicing the meeting and preparing the report to ACC has traditionally been absorbed by the former Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat; the support therefore has been quite modest. Several agencies and regional commissions were not represented at the twelfth session, and representatives from several others were able to participate only part of the time.

7. The Task Force has taken a flexible view of its work programme. Unanticipated requests from ACC sometimes have to be met, and world conditions change. But the standing item of business has been an exchange of views among participants about the development trends and prospects and emerging policy issues that are of relevance to the work of the United Nations system in the area of economic and social development. The work is thus spontaneously oriented towards preoccupations that are shared system-wide. Although the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade did not become quite the blueprint for the United Nations system that some agencies thought it might be, the Task Force's discussions about the Strategy's implementation and monitoring improved mutual understanding inside the system. In response to the resource constraints of the United Nations system, the Technical Working Group has been confined to modelling and related statistical issues, but its mandate could be extended to such issues as the measurement of poverty or the rate of return to investments in social or human capital.

8. As a result of the vague constitutional mandate of the Task Force, the specific content of its agenda has been largely subject to the discretion of the chairman, based on occasional directives from ACC. This may not be ideal, but, given the nature of the body, it is probably the only feasible approach, as the Department of Economic and Social Development seems to be the main substantive body charged with the pursuit of system-wide approaches or assessments of policy issues.

9. To increase transparency, it might be useful to modify the name of the Task Force to "Task Force on Development Objectives, Issues and Prospects", to better reflect the wide range of its discussions.

II. TASK FORCE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

10. The ACC Task Force on Science and Technology for Development, at its twelfth session, in February 1991, considered the following topics:

(a) Draft report of the Secretary-General to the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development on environmentally sound technologies, stressing ways and means of enhancing the participation of

developing countries in research and development of such technologies, and promoting access to them;

(b) Review of progress reports on endogenous capacity-building and inter-agency missions;

(c) New and emerging areas of science and technology, in particular review of a bibliography of the United Nations system's activities in biotechnology;

(d) New developments and trends in the programme and activities of the United Nations system in science and technology.

11. The Task Force also held an informal "window" meeting with representatives of some member States for a frank exchange of views on issues of mutual concern.

12. The Task Force held an informal meeting to share views on the expected output of the eleventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development with regard to the Task Force work. The Task Force, at its twelfth session, was apprised of the outcome of that meeting and the comments and views expressed.

13. In view of the close relationship between the mandate of the Task Force on Science and Technology for Development and the Task Force on Long-Term Development Objectives, it was considered that arrangements should be made to hold joint meetings between the two Task Forces to discuss system-wide topics relating to medium- and long-term technological management and planning, including early warning on technological developments having potential global significance.

14. The Task Force also endorsed the proposal of the former Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation that an international meeting be held on technology assessment and forecasting in strategic planning and management, with the participation of experts from all regions, the United Nations system and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

15. The approach and focus of the work of the Task Force was entirely in accordance with the decisions of CPC, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly with regard to coordination and cooperation, as well as operational activities within the United Nations system.

III. TASK FORCE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

16. The Task Force on Rural Development held its nineteenth meeting at the headquarters of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), Nairobi, from 22 to 24 May 1991.

17. The meeting was characterized by a renewed sense of common purpose and desire to break fresh ground in the substantive discussions. This was fostered by the presentation of thought-provoking technical reports on recent meetings of its subsidiary panels and working groups and the report on the review of the experiences of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and United Nations agencies in implementing the Programme of Action of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.

18. Several agencies informed the Task Force of major initiatives being undertaken in the area of rural development and sought inter-agency collaboration in their implementation. FAO reported on the main conclusions and recommendations of the FAO/Netherlands Conference on Agriculture and the Environment, which was held in April 1991, and on the International Cooperative Programme Framework for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (ICPF/SARD). ICPF/SARD, which provides a framework for inter-agency collaboration in promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development, was subsequently approved by the FAO Conference in November 1991. UNCHS (Habitat) informed the Task Force of the main elements of its Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. Attention was drawn to other major meetings in 1990, in particular the International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa, sponsored by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); the World Summit for Children, sponsored by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); and the World Conference on Education for All, sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

19. The reports on the annual meetings of the Panels on Monitoring and Evaluation and on People's Participation raised considerable interest among member agencies. The report of the Panels' joint session on participatory monitoring and evaluation provided a useful analysis of the advantages and shortcomings of various technical approaches as well as insights into socio-political obstacles affecting their implementation.

20. The decision of the Working Group on Industrial Contribution to Rural Development to focus its efforts on the linkage between industrial development and rural poverty alleviation was strongly endorsed by Task Force members. A study will be prepared on the role of rural industries in poverty alleviation - issues and experiences, for the next meeting of the Working Group.

21. The discussions of the Task Force on the report on the review of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, which had been prepared by a team of external consultants, were constructive and valuable. FAO expressed its appreciation for the cooperation and assistance received from Task Force members throughout the review exercise. The comments of the Task Force on the report on the review were subsequently submitted to the FAO Conference in November 1991, together with the report on the review and the Director-General's comments thereon. The Conference recognized the continuing validity of the Programme of Action and the need for Governments, FAO and other United Nations agencies to intensify their efforts in implementing it.

22. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the convener of the Working Group on the Impact of Macroeconomic Policies on the Rural Poor, reported on recent studies undertaken in that area. It was agreed to review the topic in more detail at the next session, by which time additional resource material would be available.

23. The Task Force recognized the continuing importance of issues related to women in development and suggested closer cooperation in that area among the agencies.

IV. JOINT UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION COMMITTEE

24. The Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) held its seventeenth session in New York from 24 to 26 June 1991.

25. During 1991, JUNIC continued its efforts to coordinate information activities undertaken by the United Nations, the agencies and the programmes on specific topics, with a view to projecting a more coherent image of the system as a whole, while at the same time making optimal use of the limited resources available system-wide.

26. The issues discussed by JUNIC members during the past year included the following:

(a) Arrangements for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

(b) Financing of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS);

(c) Participation in international exhibits;

(d) Agenda IV television series;

(e) Azimuths, a television magazine;

(f) United Nations identity package;

(g) The future of Development Forum;

(h) Observance of World Non-Smoking Day.

27. Among the special events that will take place in 1992 and beyond, JUNIC gave priority consideration to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It discussed a number of measures intended to generate and enhance media interest and coverage of the Conference. These include a sourcebook for media, journalists' tours, a joint system-wide exhibit to be held at the Conference, and others.

28. JUNIC also considered the question of financing NGLS. In response to a proposal to recommend to ACC that NGLS become a jointly financed activity of the United Nations system, funded through assessed contributions, JUNIC decided that members should consult with their respective programmes and agencies on all aspects of the administrative and financial implications of that proposal. The question was further discussed at two special sessions of NGLS sponsors, convened at Geneva in September and October 1991. Additional consultations on the question are expected to provide the basis of the recommendation of JUNIC to ACC.

29. In reviewing its existing projects, JUNIC noted with concern that financial support for the Development Forum was dwindling. The overwhelming majority of JUNIC members expressed their inability to increase their current level of contributions. It was suggested that the possibility of increased subvention from the regular budget of the United Nations, without which the publication could not be continued, should be further explored. It was hoped that a way could be found to retain this valuable publication.

30. JUNIC also examined the issue of participation in international exhibits. In that regard, it decided on joint participation by the United Nations in the Taejon International Exposition, to be held in the Republic of Korea from 7 August to 7 November 1993. It was agreed that the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat would act as the lead agency for the event, in accordance with the guidelines for joint participation by the United Nations system in international exhibitions. Following the receipt of a formal invitation, the Secretary-General accepted in principle the participation of the United Nations system in that event. The Department of Public Information has begun the preparation of a feasibility study for participation by the United Nations system in the event.

31. Discussion also continued on inter-agency cooperation in audio-visual productions, the main issue being the "Agenda IV" television series and Azimuths, a television magazine.

32. With regard to the proposal for a "United Nations system identity package", there was little progress made during the reporting period. JUNIC agreed that UNESCO should convene a meeting, with the participation of FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), with a view to preparing a feasibility study on the issue. It was expected that, following consultations with their respective organizations, UNICEF, the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO) would also participate.

33. Though no report was prepared on the public image of the United Nations, the Chairman of JUNIC suggested exploring the possibility of convening a workshop on the subject, with the participation of directors of development agencies. A working group under the chairmanship of UNESCO (and including FAO, UNEP, WHO, UNICEF and the United Nations) was established for the purpose of preparing a feasibility study for the holding of an international information directors round table in 1992.

V. SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES

34. The ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities held its twenty-fifth session at Vienna from 10 to 14 June 1991. Twenty-two organizations participated. Participants included all but one of the regional commissions, as well as several major non-United Nations organizations whose statistical activities are important internationally and which participate in a variety of coordination arrangements with the statistical work of the United Nations system. The broad representation in the Subcommittee sessions has enabled more comprehensive coordination to be achieved. It also provides additional challenge in that these organizations bring their own special and disparate concerns to be taken into account.

35. The Subcommittee identified five issues of major importance and brought them to the attention of ACC. The first was the special challenge that existed for coordination of assistance in statistics to the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The aim of such coordination was to deliver assistance that met country needs, avoided duplication and led to a rational allocation of resources. The Subcommittee noted that coordination in this area had improved. The second matter was coordination issues involved in strategies for statistical development in Africa. Many members of the Subcommittee were actively involved in special statistical programmes for Africa. The Subcommittee, while appreciating those activities, both substantive and coordination-related, expressed continuing concern about the need for coordination in such an undertaking. The third matter was the further progress made in a coordinated effort of several organizations towards monitoring the achievement of social goals in the 1990s, in particular the launching of a number of pilot studies through joint efforts. The fourth matter was the Subcommittee's consideration of the Human Development Report, issued by UNDP. Several members called attention to certain problems connected with the second edition of the Report. Most were continuations of problems that had been brought up at the previous session of the Subcommittee in relation to the first edition, including the question of coordination with international organizations. The Subcommittee considered that it would be useful to find ways to better institutionalize the role of the agencies and regional commissions in the timely planning and production of future issues. The fifth matter was environment statistics. The Subcommittee considered that a high degree of coordination had already been achieved among the statistical services but, in view of (a) an increased amount of activity related in part to the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and (b) the relative newness of the field, additional challenges and opportunities for cooperation existed.

36. The Subcommittee also made recommendations and reached conclusions on ways to improve (a) coordination of data collection, compilation and dissemination and (b) development of concepts, definitions and recommendations within a wide range of statistical fields comprising, inter alia, international trade statistics; revision of the System of National Accounts; the International Comparison Programme; services statistics; demographic statistics, including population and housing censuses and the International

Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems; social statistics and indicators; indicative patterns of consumption; tourism and migration statistics; and the World Programme of Industrial Statistics.

37. The Subcommittee also considered ways to maintain and improve the coordination of publication and dissemination policies for such activities as the servicing of ad hoc requests for data, dissemination of statistics and statistical databases to developing countries and secondary dissemination of statistical data. Methods to improve the coordinated development of databases both technically and in terms of content were also considered, along with the work of the Advisory Committee for the Coordination of Information Systems (ACCIS) relevant to the work in statistics, in particular its activities related to the United Nations telecommunications network, work on computer security and database dissemination. The changing role of the statistical function in an international organization resulting particularly from the evolution of informatics was also considered. The Subcommittee reviewed the implications for technical cooperation in statistics of changes in UNDP and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) policies related to project execution and agency support costs and considered coordination of household survey programmes, in particular the National Household Survey Capability Programme, the Living Standards Measurement Study and the Social Dimensions of Adjustment Project; coordination of data-collection activities to reduce the reporting burden on countries; the base year for statistics, particularly indices of external trade; and coordinated actions required to follow-up decisions and recommendations that had been made by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-sixth session, in 1991.

38. The major output during the year, resulting from the coordinated effort of many members of the Subcommittee, was the publication of The World's Women 1970-1990. It had been prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat in a joint effort with UNFPA, UNICEF, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). That publication, which made information on women available in a highly accessible form, was seen as both addressing major social issues and advancing the use of statistics. The suppliers of data and research material for the publication included FAO, WHO, UNESCO, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat.

VI. SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION

39. The Subcommittee on Nutrition held its eighteenth session at UNFPA headquarters, New York, from 25 February to 1 March 1991. The symposium held on 25 and 26 February, entitled "Nutrition and population", emphasized breast-feeding, child-spacing and nutrition, and complementarities and possibilities for integrating health, population and nutrition programmes. A statement on the subject was agreed upon by the Subcommittee and brought to the attention

of ACC. Based on previous work, a statement on the control of iron deficiency - the most common nutritional deficiency affecting women, in particular - was prepared by the Advisory Group on Nutrition and also brought to the attention of ACC.

40. The eighteenth session was preceded by ad hoc group meetings on the control of iodine and vitamin A deficiency, which reported to the Subcommittee. Formation of a third group, on the control of iron deficiency, was approved by the Subcommittee following a preliminary meeting.

41. The Subcommittee considered reports on work in progress. In particular, preparations for the International Conference on Nutrition were discussed in detail. Proposals for a global micronutrient initiative were carefully considered, and although agreement was not reached at the session, the discussion stimulated further proposals later in the year.

42. At its executive session, the Subcommittee focused on the budget, which had faced a deficit in 1990 and an uncertain future owing largely to the substantial decline in contributions in real terms over the previous several years. It instructed the secretariat to investigate procedures to ensure a secure and predictable budget for the future.

43. In consultation with the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Financial and Budgetary Questions) (CCAQ (FB)) and with certain member agencies, the secretariat proposed and circulated recommendations for a new finance and budget procedure. The issue was considered by CCAQ (FB) at its meeting in New York in September. This led to a special meeting of the Subcommittee - to which all United Nations member agencies were invited - convened by the Chairman of the Subcommittee at Geneva on 15 October. With anticipated extrabudgetary funding, a financing gap of about US$ 400,000 remains to be filled. Efforts to secure adequate funding for 1992-1993 continue. An outline budget for 1994-1995 will be prepared for the nineteenth session.

44. At the meeting of the Organizational Committee of ACC, held at UNESCO headquarters on 4 April, the summary report on the eighteenth session was presented. The Subcommittee was one of three ACC subsidiary bodies examined in detail and viewed as "one of the more successful" of the subsidiary bodies.

45. A sharp cutback in activities was implemented in 1991 to try to ensure that expenditures for the two-year period 1990-1991 did not exceed 1990 contributions and those pledged for 1991 (not all of which were received). This necessitated cutting back on Advisory Group meetings and other work not covered by extrabudgetary sources.

46. Work began in December 1990 on the preparation of a Second Report on the World Nutrition Situation, supported by extrabudgetary funds, to estimate trends in nutrition and related food, economic and social indicators by region and for all developing countries. Detailed case-studies on six populous countries (Brazil, Egypt, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan) were

commissioned. A database was compiled on women's nutritional status (mainly anthropometry and anaemia), and preliminary projections of trends to the year 2000 were considered. Publication of the report, which should also contribute to the International Conference on Nutrition, is planned for mid-1992.

47. Case-studies of national policies and programmes as they affect nutrition were initiated. The work, supported by UNICEF, started in 1990 and gathered momentum in 1991, with case-studies commissioned in four countries (India (two States), the United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand and Zimbabwe); two more countries are to be identified, selected partly to align with the UNICEF country programming cycle. The factors considered in the framework are those affecting food security, infectious disease and caring capacity, in line with the International Conference on Nutrition. The study should be completed in mid-1992, and results will be presented by nationals at the International Union of Nutritional Sciences meeting in 1993, and will be available for the Conference.

48. The Advisory Group on Nutrition held two meetings, in February and November, which were shortened owing to financial constraints. These led to a set of proposals for future activities for consideration by the Subcommittee at its nineteenth session.

49. An informal meeting was held in Toronto on 9 and 10 October, at which priority problems and possible future activities were discussed, for consideration by the Subcommittee at its nineteenth session. These included new initiatives on evaluation, training and institutions, research priorities and micronutrients.

50. The secretariat of the Subcommittee contributed to the methodology for the FAO Sixth World Food Survey, to a WHO preparatory meeting for an expert committee on anthropometry, and to considerations on nutritional surveillance initiated by UNICEF in September.

51. At the request of the co-sponsors of the International Conference on Nutrition - FAO and WHO - the secretariat prepared a draft theme paper for the Conference entitled "Assessing, analysing and monitoring the nutrition situation".

52. Several publications were issued: "Controlling iron deficiency", based on a workshop held in 1990, was published in early 1991; a policy brief entitled "Some options for improving nutrition in the 1990s", stemming from a meeting in November 1990 and reviewed by the Subcommittee at its eighteenth session, was published and distributed. A background document, entitled "Nutrition-relevant actions", which received financial support from the German Technical Assistance Corporation (GTZ), is in press. Material from a workshop held in 1989 on managing successful nutrition programmes is in press, with support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada. Papers from the 1991 symposium on nutrition and population are being finalized for publication. One issue of SCN News (No. 7), rather than the usual two, owing to budgetary constraints, was published, with support from the

Government of the Netherlands. A special issue of "Extracts from SCN News", on breast-feeding, was published in May, with support from UNICEF. The usual print runs for these publications is 4,000, distributed in bulk to and through member agencies (about 1,000), and by direct mail. The majority of these go to developing countries. "Uses of anthropometry" (paper No. 7) has been translated into French and Spanish (by UNICEF) and will be published by the Subcommittee in those languages.

VII. ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS

53. The sixth session of ACCIS was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 17 to 20 September 1991. In addition to that meeting, there were four meetings of technical panels and working groups and one meeting of the ACCIS Steering Committee.

54. In fulfilling its objective to facilitate access to United Nations system information by Member States, ACCIS, in 1991, developed a number of products:

(a) Register of Development Activities 1990. In conformance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/71 and General Assembly resolution 37/226, to produce a register of development activities, ACCIS publishes an annual register from data submitted by the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In late 1991, the register containing data for 1990 was published. A survey of end-users was completed in 1991. In summary, the results indicate that the register is greatly appreciated as the sole comprehensive source of information on all development activities of the United Nations system. In the light of the survey results, ACC has requested that ACCIS continue publication of the register in its present form and the Economic and Social Council has so noted.

(b) Directory of Selected Collections of United Nations System Publications. In response to a need frequently expressed by both Member States and United Nations organizations, ACCIS compiled a list of collections available at the country level of United Nations system publications. The Directory lists, by country or geographic area, the location of libraries and documentation centres managed by the United Nations system, selected libraries or information services that maintain collections of United Nations publications, and United Nations information centres and services.

(c) Database dissemination. Access to United Nations databases is considered an area of need by Member States. It is a complex issue which has to be addressed in its totality to be effective. ACCIS has begun the process by getting the commitment of several United Nations organizations to share data in some of the bibliographic databases. Since those databases have been developed to different standards, ACCIS, in 1991, successfully developed computer programs that allow for conversion to the UNESCO common communication format for bibliographic description. As a result, data from some of the larger bibliographic databases of the system can be effectively merged to

provide information on United Nations publications by sector or United Nations source. Work is continuing, with the goal of providing more effective access to United Nations databases by Member States.

(d) ACCIS Newsletter. Six issues of the newsletter were distributed to a circulation list of 2,000 organizations and individuals in over 160 countries.

(e) Serial publications of the United Nations system. In 1988, ACCIS produced a directory of serial publications of the United Nations system. Work in 1991 consisted of the updating of the database in order to produce a revised printed edition.

(f) Exchange of development information. Realizing that improved cooperation between development aid donors is needed to prevent duplication of donor efforts and a waste of available resources, an informal study group on the exchange of development information has been formed. The group, in which ACCIS is a participant, consists of representatives from intergovernmental organizations, bilateral donors, non-governmental organizations and research institutes. At its sixth session, in 1991, ACCIS agreed to supply United Nations system data on development activities from its database to this study group, thereby saving individual organizations the additional costs of supplying data on an individual basis.

(g) Macrothesaurus. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1982/71, requested that ACCIS compile, update and popularize common indexing vocabularies at the generic level. To carry out that request, ACCIS determined that its secretariat should collaborate with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the preparation of the fourth edition of the Macrothesaurus. Published in 1991, the Macrothesaurus has been well received by Member States and United Nations organizations. In the ongoing support for the database, as well as the preparation of subsequent editions of the printed product, the ACCIS secretariat will serve as liaison between users within the organizations and the database staff at OECD. This will involve the vetting of new terms and changes for inclusion, as well as informing users within the United Nations system of changes in procedures and policy.

55. To promote improvement in the information infrastructure of the United Nations system, the work of ACCIS included the following activities:

(a) United Nations Telecommunications Network. In 1989, ACCIS had assisted with the preparation of the documentation required for the passage of International Telecommunication Union (ITU) resolution COM8/1 (Nice, 1989), by which permission was granted to the United Nations to carry the telecommunications traffic of the specialized agencies, subject to specified conditions. During 1991, ACCIS assisted the United Nations in determining the needs of the specialized agencies. The United Nations will now continue to work with agencies on a one-on-one basis and present a status report to ACCIS when it convenes in 1993.

(b) Information security. Responding to a need frequently voiced by the Panel of External Auditors for greater security of the information stored in United Nations system computers, ACCIS has prepared information system security guidelines. The guidelines were endorsed by ACC for transmittal to CCAQ (FB) and the international auditors of United Nations system organizations. The guidelines were presented to the Panel of Auditors of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and IAEA by the Chairman of ACCIS when it met in London in December 1991.

(c) Management of electronic records. In 1988-1989, ACCIS addressed the question of management of electronic records by producing guidelines for use by United Nations organizations. In 1990-1991, it examined how the guidelines could be implemented and which standards for electronic records management were necessary for their implementation. In 1991, it produced a report on records management functions and open systems standards, held a workshop on electronic records management and prepared a survey of electronic records practices in United Nations organizations. The workshop was held in Washington, D.C., for participants from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, and at Vienna, for organizations of the United Nations system based there. A senior management briefing on the subject was conducted at WHO headquarters, Geneva.

(d) Information management, strategies and standards. Since the use of the same standards has been envisaged to meet specific needs in different areas of the information system activities of United Nations organizations, ACCIS decided, in 1991, to establish a technical panel to examine the applicability of standards in a global approach to information management. Included among these standards are open systems interconnection (OSI), X.400 Message Handling Service and X.500 Directory Service.

(e) Clearing-house service. In 1991, ACCIS created a clearing-house service of United Nations system-wide reports on standards, strategies and job descriptions relating to information systems and services. The service will be managed by the secretariat staff within existing resources.

(f) Optical storage technology. In 1991, ACCIS reviewed the issue of optical storage technology for use by United Nations organizations. Based on its observations, it has requested that the secretariat carry out a detailed survey of the present and planned use by United Nations organizations of optical storage technology, including WORM (write-once-read-many) and CD ROM formats. The study will include an assessment of the current state of the technology, the availability of international standards and recommendations for use.

(g) Inter-library cooperation, standards and management. At its sixth session, ACCIS established a Technical Panel on Inter-Library Cooperation, Standards and Management. Among the issues identified for consideration by the Panel were the introduction of automated systems to libraries, where they were lacking; development of a uniform catalogue as a preliminary stage for developing a central electronic library for the United Nations system;

standards required for inter-connectivity and interworking between libraries; and an inventory of current resources and problems in the United Nations library community.

56. ACCIS continued to provide advice on information systems and computerized databases to United Nations organizations and member States as requested.

VIII. INTER-AGENCY CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IN THE 1990s

57. The first inter-agency consultation on the follow-up to the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in September 1990, was held at Geneva on 1 and 2 July 1991. The consultation provided an opportunity for an exchange of information and views between agencies on follow-up activities undertaken so far and planned at various levels in the light of the Programme of Action itself and the decisions taken thereon by the General Assembly. Participants reviewed arrangements at the global level for review and monitoring of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action; the follow-up undertaken at the national level; and action taken by individual organizations, as well as their contributions to the global level follow-up.

58. Underlying the discussions at the inter-agency consultation were the new challenges confronting the United Nations system in pursuit of the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action. It was emphasized that agencies had an important role to play in providing financial and technical assistance to the least developed countries. Also stressed during the discussions was the need for agencies to assume an advocacy and advisory role vis-à-vis the least developed countries. Attention was drawn to the problems and needs of those countries and to the necessity of mobilizing international support, including new financial resources, for them as well as assisting them to implement required policies. With respect to the latter, several participants noted the emerging need for agency activities to be increasingly geared to a more policy-oriented role, and to the elaboration of sectoral strategies, in assisting the least developed countries in implementing the Programme of Action.

59. The consultation reiterated the importance of the country review process, which constituted the principal mechanism for implementation of and follow-up to the Programme of Action at the national level, and agreed that the contributions of agencies to the process needed to be enhanced; ways and means had to be found to organize inter-agency cooperation in that regard and to strengthen the capacities of agencies and their involvement in this area. It was agreed that the matter should be reviewed at the next inter-agency consultation, as well as by the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) (CCSQ (OPS)).

60. The consultation welcomed the decisions taken by the governing bodies of a number of organizations. The importance of strengthened efforts of the agencies in the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Programme of Action at the national level, within their respective fields of competence, was underscored. Moreover, the consultation reiterated the need for establishing focal points for the least developed countries in agencies, where they did not exist, and strengthening existing ones. The focal points should be of a substantive nature, with adequate capacity, and should also prepare for the review and appraisal of the Programme of Action at the sectoral level, which has been set out in General Assembly resolution 45/206 as a new element in the follow-up process. While the exact time-frame of sectoral appraisal meetings should be decided by individual organizations, it was agreed that at least one or two such meetings should be organized before the mid-term review of the Programme of Action in 1995.

61. Also mentioned during the course of the consultation as areas in which a strengthening of inter-agency collaboration was needed were the issues of refugees and mass-scale population displacement in the least developed countries and the delivery of related emergency assistance, as well as the problem of AIDS.

62. This first stock-taking of follow-up activities to the Programme of Action within the United Nations system has given a useful basis for planning further action at the secretariat level, contributing to the mobilization of all parts of the system and to the necessary coordination of activities. Strengthening the links between the various levels of follow-up to the Programme of Action (national, regional and global) should also be seen as an important outcome of the meeting as well as of planned future consultations.

IX. INTER-AGENCY GROUP ON NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY

63. Members of the Inter-Agency Group have continued to cooperate with one another as part of the overall objectives of coordination of their activities in the field of new and renewable sources of energy.

64. During its tenth session, in March 1991, the Group was briefed on the deliberations of the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy at its fifth session, and considered actions to be taken in preparation of the sixth session of the Committee. Individual members of the Group made presentations on current and planned activities by their respective entities at the national, regional and/or global levels covering a wide range of activities as part of the coordination and cooperation efforts.

65. An important focus of the Group was the emerging consensus on the role of new and renewable sources of energy in achieving sustainable development with reduced adverse environmental impacts. The Group agreed that this focus should receive increasing attention by the United Nations system, as should the promotion of the rapid transfer of those technologies to developing countries.

66. The spirit of cooperation and collaboration was exemplified during the tenth session of the Group by the consideration of a draft report by FAO entitled "Energy policy for rural development: a review of inter-agency coordination", which focused on the activities in this area by five United Nations bodies, namely, the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development of the United Nations Secretariat, FAO, UNEP, UNESCO and the World Bank. The Group commended the report as an important beginning in a series of such exercises, highlighting areas of concrete cooperation and coordination of activities in the field of new and renewable sources of energy, and concluded that there was a need for a common approach and methodology for evaluating projects of this type.

67. At a later date, UNDP circulated to the members of the Group a report entitled "Strategy for disseminating and commercializing renewable energy technology". The report underlines the lack of follow-up to the numerous projects financed by multilateral/bilateral organizations for demonstrating technical and financial viability of new and renewable sources of energy technologies over the years. The report, which focuses on photovoltaic technologies, includes an examination of financial and institutional barriers to commercialization concentrating on policy and markets.

68. The Group concluded that there was a need for a United Nations system-wide mechanism that could articulate policies on important energy matters, in which the Group could play an important role in evaluating, discussing, analysing and articulating related topics, for example, energy planning, as well as energy conservation and efficiency of use - in a broad sense, including environment and economic development.

69. Since the tenth session, members of the Group have actively participated in several sessions of the United Nations Solar Energy Group on Environment and Development, which has prepared a report entitled "Solar energy: a strategy in support of environment and development" (A/AC.218/1992/S/Rev.1) for consideration by the Committee at its sixth session and by the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at its fourth session. The report will be submitted to the Conference.

70. Consultations and exchange of information in relation to the preparations for the sixth session of the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy have continued and data provided by individual members of the Group have been incorporated into the input of the Secretary-General for consideration by the Committee at its sixth session.

X. INTERSECRETARIAT GROUP FOR WATER RESOURCES

71. The twelfth session of the ACC Intersecretariat Group for Water Resources was held at FAO headquarters from 25 to 27 September 1991. The session was preceded by the meeting of the Steering Committee on Water Supply and Sanitation, on 23 and 24 September. The main issues under consideration by the Group were the preparations for the International Conference on Water and

the Environment and the follow-up to the strategy for the implementation of the Mar del Plata Action Plan in the 1990s, including the International Action Programme on Water and Sustainable Agricultural Development, for which FAO serves as the lead agency.

72. Concerning the International Conference on Water and the Environment, the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, at its third session, agreed that it would be a conference on government-designated experts, and serve the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The results of the International Conference would be reviewed by the Preparatory Committee at its fourth session. Three sessions of the Intersecretariat Group's Steering Committee of the International Conference on Water and the Environment were held during the course of the year in order to define the scope of the Conference and to determine the tasks to be undertaken by each organization within the preparatory process.

73. In accordance with the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the major themes for the International Conference would be integrated water resources development and management; water resources assessment and impact of climate change on water resources; protection of water resources, water quality and aquatic ecosystems; water and sustainable urban development and drinking water supply and sanitation in the urban context; water for sustainable food production and rural development and drinking water supply and sanitation in the rural context; and mechanisms for implementation and coordination at the global, national, regional and local levels.

74. In the future, the Intersecretariat Group for Water Resources will focus on issues of cooperation and coordination for the implementation of the strategy for the implementation of the Mar del Plata Action Plan in the 1990s, and the recommendations stemming from the International Conference on Water and the Environment and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development concerning the freshwater resources component of Agenda 21. At its forthcoming session, the Group will focus its attention on issues related to water resources assessment, protection of water resources, water quality and aquatic ecosystems, water for sustainable urban development, water for sustainable rural and agricultural development, and integrated water resources management. The promotion of an integrated approach to the development and management of water resources will constitute the central theme for the deliberations of the Group.

XI. AD HOC INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON OUTER SPACE ACTIVITIES

75. The Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities was held at the headquarters of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO), Geneva, from 18 to 20 September 1991. The Meeting considered the items on its agenda, reviewing activities requiring coordination and discussing several matters of mutual interest relating to the programming of activities, with a view to avoiding duplication.

76. In its detailed consideration of matters to be included in the integrated report of the Secretary-General on the programmes of work of United Nations organizations, the Meeting had before it a draft of the annual report of the Secretary-General entitled "Coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system, programmes of work for 1992, 1993 and future years". The draft contained information on activities and programmes involving the applications of space technology in the fields of remote sensing of the Earth, communications, meteorology, navigation, disaster management and other related fields. Suggestions and comments will be incorporated in the final text of the report, to be submitted by the Secretary-General to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its twenty-ninth session, in 1992, in document A/AC.105/491. In the context of preparing the report, the agencies negotiated various aspects of their participation in the projects to be undertaken in the period 1992-1993.

77. The Meeting addressed a number of issues, including an evaluation of activities supported by the United Nations, in its review of cooperation by organizations of the United Nations system in remote-sensing activities. The Meeting focused on what should be the emphasis of such support in the future. The participants agreed, among other things, that workshops, seminars and meetings on new and advanced remote-sensing systems were needed for the benefit of decision and policy makers in the developing countries in order for them to enhance their capacity to manage and harness their natural resources. Also, in view of the meagre resources of each department and agency of the United Nations and the need to avoid duplication of efforts, it was necessary to foster inter-agency participation in those projects.

78. Noting the effort being made by the United Nations to enhance the capabilities of the developing countries in space science and technology through the establishment, in existing regional/national institutions, of centres of education at the regional level to meet regional needs, the Meeting had before it three project documents prepared by the Outer Space Affairs Division on the establishment of the centre for space science and technology education for the benefit of member States of the African region, of the Asia and Pacific region and of the Latin American and Caribbean region, respectively. After a detailed discussion of the project documents, the Meeting noted that, while the United Nations had taken an important initiative that could be generally supported, there were several areas of concern with regard to implementation that needed to be addressed before proceeding to the next stage of implementation.

79. Participants at the Meeting were cognizant of the fact that the General Assembly, in resolution 45/72, had urged Member States and international organizations to consider supporting the efforts of the United Nations in connection with International Space Year, 1992, and the recommendation that those activities complement the efforts under way for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also planned for 1992. At the previous Meeting, the United Nations was requested to ask all organizations of the system for information on activities to be included in the programme for International Space Year and for a revision of the guidebook on United Nations

participation in the Year, accordingly. The Meeting had before it the revised guidebook and reviewed the progress of International Space Year activities, agreeing to continue to cooperate on the proposed activities. It was further agreed that information on future activities planned for the Year, when finalized, would be published as supplements to the guidebook.

80. Concerning other matters, the Meeting noted the preparation of interdisciplinary remote-sensing programmes by several agencies, especially on the study and monitoring of the environment. The Meeting reviewed the project document, submitted by FAO following requests made at the previous session, for a joint inter-agency project on land use and vegetation mapping of Africa, based on satellite remote sensing. Stressing its importance for Africa, the Meeting strongly supported the proposed project and agreed that detailed technical comments would be communicated by interested organizations directly to FAO.

81. The Meeting also noted that, owing to the work being carried out by the Inter-agency Meeting, the concerns expressed by various intergovernmental committees, particularly the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, relating to the duplication of efforts in the work of various organizations of the United Nations system, had been satisfactorily dealt with and that those committees had positively commented on the work of the Inter-agency Meeting in their recent reports.

XII. AD HOC INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON WOMEN

82. The fifteenth Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting on Women was held at Vienna on 11 and 12 March 1991. The representatives of the agencies expressed their concern about the continued lack of coordination in the contribution of the United Nations system to intergovernmental bodies, documents and publications. That was reflected in their request to hold the Inter-agency Meeting on Women biannually in preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 and to hold the regular meeting before the session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

83. The Meeting elaborated further on recommendations made by the Commission at its thirty-fifth session, by identifying important areas that should be included in reports on the priority themes, monitoring the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and in the report on operational activities for development undertaken by the United Nations system. Reporting responsibilities and attendance at meetings still presented a burden on limited resources.

84. With regard to the reports for the Commission on the Status of Women on the priority themes, additional areas of emphasis were identified. In the equality report, issues such as access to land, water and financial resources, the level of participation in agrarian reform, inheritance rights and ownership were considered important for developing countries. In the report on the integration of women in development, the role of national machinery as

a catalyst to effective mainstreaming of women and a life-course approach to development strategies were considered the main points. For the report on women and the environment, it was considered essential to raise the issue to the political level and include information on transnational companies, refugee and migrant women, shelter and use of the environment. The report for the priority theme on peace would be based on the meetings on women in public life, but, subsequent to the Meeting, the interregional consultation on women in public life was postponed owing to the lack of financial resources.

85. With regard to publications, the merits and focus of the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development were discussed in the light of the publication of The World's Women, 1970-1990. It was strongly felt that duplication should be avoided and that a review should be undertaken for the current publications regarding mandates, cost estimates, periodicity, target audiences, impact and focus. The forthcoming 1994 edition of the World Survey should concentrate on major emerging issues and should reflect action strategies and plans in order to be useful at the national and academic levels in preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

86. The representatives at the Inter-agency Meeting expressed concern that the Commission on the Status of Women had not addressed problems such as population and unequal economic relations in its resolution on the preparations for the World Conference on Women. The results of a three-year analysis on a coordinated approach to strengthen national machinery, planned by the United Nations Development Fund for Women, would be presented to the World Conference.

87. Following the recommendation by the Commission that more women be nominated and recruited to United Nations posts, the Meeting recommended that the obligation be extended to the recruitment of experts and consultants.

88. As to operational activities, the Meeting recommended that the issue of women in development be mainstreamed into all chapters of the report on operational activities for development undertaken by the United Nations system, in addition to the separate chapter on women requested by the General Assembly in resolution 44/171. The participants at the Meeting discussed and identified the important areas they considered should be included in the report.

XIII. AD HOC INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY

89. In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 44/82 and 45/133 and on the recommendation of the Coordinator for the International Year of the Family, the Administrative Committee on Coordination approved the establishment of ad hoc inter-agency meetings on the International Year of the Family, in order to develop a system-wide coordinated approach and actions aimed at assisting Governments in preparing for and observing the Year. The first Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting on the International Year of the Family was

convened on 13 and 14 March 1991. Its agenda included a review of family-related mandates and programmes of the organizations, agencies and bodies of the United Nations system; an assessment of the role of the system in the preparations for and observance of the Year; and the establishment of inter-agency cooperation on the Year.

90. The meeting concluded that a distinct vision and clarity of purpose was necessary for the preparations of the Year and that the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system should assist in achieving those objectives, especially at the local, national and regional levels. Its recommendations included the preparation of a technical paper on such issues as conceptualization, typologies, structures and functions concerning the family, in order to develop a general approach; identification of specific themes for the Year that highlight the dimension of each agency's mandate; strengthening the role of field and regional offices in promoting local and national action; and devoting special attention to projects relating to refugee families.

XIV. AD HOC INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON DISABLED PERSONS

91. While the focus of the United Nations disability programme is being turned from awareness-raising efforts to action, it is envisaged that there is a need for continuing and even intensifying cooperation among agencies.

92. The ninth inter-agency meeting on the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, held at Vienna from 3 to 6 December 1991, discussed the joint preparation of a long-term strategy in the field of disability beyond the Decade. It was suggested that the strategy be based on yearly priority themes, which would be taken into account in the regular activities of each of the agencies. In that context, the inter-agency meeting would consider the suggestion that the function of the meeting in the monitoring of the strategy would be:

(a) To inform the participating agencies about both the progress made during the year concerning the selected priority theme and the activities planned to be undertaken around "the theme of the year";

(b) To consult and cooperate on those activities and make the necessary adjustments to the strategy and the themes.

93. A major feature of future inter-agency meetings on disability questions is that there will be a post-Decade strategy, with particular focus on its yearly themes. This is all the more pertinent as the mandate of the inter-agency mechanism on the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons will expire in 1992.

XV. AD HOC INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON YOUTH

94. The eighth meeting of the informal inter-agency working group at the technical level on youth was held at Vienna on 30 and 31 May 1991.

95. The agenda of the meeting included a review of the progress achieved in the implementation of the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth; discussions held by the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-second session on the integration of young people into society; preparations for the observance of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year; inter-agency approaches towards improving the channels of communication between the United Nations system and youth and youth organizations; follow-up to International Literacy Year (1990); and the United Nations Volunteers programme and its potential, particularly at the field level.

96. Discussions focused predominantly on the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, in 1995. The working group emphasized the need for intensified cooperation among all youth-related organizations and agencies of the United Nations system towards achieving the major specific tasks in connection with the tenth anniversary, namely:

(a) Preparation of a calendar of activities to mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year;

(b) Review and appraisal of progress achieved and obstacles identified in implementing the objectives of the Year;

(c) Preparation of a draft world youth programme of action towards the year 2000 and beyond;

(d) The need to reinforce youth programmes and projects through overall national policy and institutional support;

(e) An efficient mechanism for interministerial cooperation and coordination and interdisciplinary approaches for an overall national youth policy;

(f) Improved techniques for scientific evaluation and assessment of the world youth programme of action.

97. It was further recommended that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat prepare a comprehensive draft outline, which should also comprise the specific procedural details for such preparations, and circulate it to member agencies for their comments. In consultation with the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, a multidisciplinary team of specialists in the field of youth should be established with the task of formulating a draft world youth programme of action.

98. In the preparations for a calendar of activities to mark the tenth anniversary of the Year, the Centre should circulate a list of concrete and specific suggestions for informational, promotional and substantive activities to concerned organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, for their review and comments. Agencies and organizations should also explore all possibilities to plan appropriate activities within their own work programmes for inclusion in the draft calendar of activities.

XVI. AD HOC INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON AGEING

99. The fourth Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting on Ageing was held at Vienna on 21 and 22 February 1991. The agenda included a review of current activities of the United Nations system in the area of ageing; preparations for the tenth anniversary, in 1992, of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Ageing; and identification of targets on ageing and means of reaching them by the year 2001.

100. The meeting also focused on future inter-agency cooperation in the context of the implementation of the action programme on ageing for 1992 and beyond, including formulation of a global strategy on ageing to the year 2001 and launching of a global information campaign to observe, in 1992, the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Ageing; elaboration of a system-wide medium-term plan on ageing; observation of the International Day for the Elderly and preparation of a new edition of the World Ageing Situation.

XVII. AD HOC INTER-AGENCY MEETINGS ON COORDINATION IN MATTERS OF INTERNATIONAL DRUG ABUSE CONTROL

101. During 1991, two Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meetings on Coordination in Matters of International Drug Abuse Control were held.

102. At the Meeting held in Vienna on 10 May 1991, participants agreed on the need for improved coordination to permit increased effectiveness in discharging the mandates entrusted to the United Nations in drug abuse control. Focusing on the practical requirements for coordination, the following priorities were identified: (a) exchange of information; (b) agreement on areas of competence and responsibilities; (c) identification of shared interests and potential for collaborative action; (d) pooling of resources; and (e) implementation of joint projects. It was noted that, at the first regular session of ACC in 1991, it was decided that the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) should participate fully in the work of ACC.

103. Special interest was expressed in the emerging organizational structure of UNDCP, with its exclusive responsibility for coordinating and providing effective leadership for all United Nations drug control activities. That would enable the United Nations to strengthen its role as the main focus for

concerted international action for drug abuse control, as requested by the General Assembly in resolution 45/179. Participants discussed the implementation of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control and the Global Programme of Action, with special reference to developing linkages among entities, guidelines for the preparation of the 1991 report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation in drug abuse control, the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse and other special events, including the 1991 International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (26 June), and recognized the need to highlight the impact of such events throughout the United Nations system, as well as at the national level.

104. Participants agreed on the continuing usefulness of the inter-agency meetings, complemented by a number of other possible arrangements, including periodic consultations between UNDCP and the relevant agencies and programmes.

105. Following the decision taken at the Meeting, the first issue of a periodic circular, Inter-agency Update, was published in September 1991 as a means of facilitating the exchange of information among the focal points for drug abuse control and the identification of projects for collaborative action.

106. The Inter-agency Meeting, held at the headquarters of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), London, from 11 to 13 September 1991, discussed the further development of the structure and coordinating mechanisms of UNDCP, including the creation of a new Division for Inter-organization Cooperation, to assist in promoting coordination and cooperation among the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as with national, regional and international organizations. A number of aspects of coordination, in particular joint planning and programming, coordination at the field level and a strengthened information management system, were outlined.

107. In the discussion on the implementation of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control and the Global Programme of Action, the participants reviewed the International Drug Abuse Assessment System established by UNDCP. UNDCP was in the process of computerizing the great volume of accumulated information provided by Governments, which would also include, inter alia, information from other databases, such as the UNDP Human Development database and other government-generated or supported data sources to provide a more comprehensive analysis of drug abuse in countries, subregions, regions and world wide.

108. Recalling the request of the General Assembly, in resolution 45/179, that the System-Wide Action Plan be reviewed in the light of structural changes decided on in that resolution, it was announced that UNDCP would circulate a draft report early in 1992.

109. The Meeting considered the draft report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation in drug abuse control and entrusted to UNDCP the task of editing and incorporating modifications in the present and future reports of the Secretary-General. The Meeting agreed that reports to the

General Assembly on the subject should in future, cover a full calendar year; a transitional report would be prepared for submission to the Assembly at its forty-seventh session, in 1992.

110. It was agreed that UNDCP would endeavour to provide suggestions for possible approaches to the observance of the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse. It was noted that the general theme for the Decade, "Preventing drug abuse: all together against a common threat", could be supplemented by special sub-themes to be highlighted in connection with the annual observance of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. It was suggested that, at the earliest convenient date, UNDCP could organize a consultation with the main non-governmental organization committees to provide thorough briefings, help determine future action, and seek enhanced collaboration with non-governmental organizations in connection with the Decade.

111. Informal parallel consultations held during the Inter-agency Meeting in London covered emerging aspects relating to demand reduction. A revised interactive way of developing policy and technical projects was outlined. At the initiative of UNDCP, it was agreed to move forward by discussing policy issues in substantive areas, and to develop agreed policy positions, as well as to implement joint country investigations which would yield plans for cooperative programmes. It was agreed that the topic "Inter-agency collaboration on demand reduction programmes" should be included on the proposed agenda for the Inter-agency Meeting in September 1992.

XVIII. AD HOC INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON SECURITY MATTERS

112. Coordinated action by the organizations of the United Nations system in all matters relating to the safety and security of staff members, their spouses and dependants is of great importance. As in previous years, the United Nations Security Coordinator, acting on behalf of the Secretary-General, has served as the focal point in ensuring inter-agency cooperation on security matters and a coherent response by the organizations of the United Nations system to any emergency situations. He has also been responsible for coordinating, planning and implementing inter-agency security and safety programmes.

113. As a result of the general worsening in the global security situation, and following discussions between the United Nations Security Coordinator and UNDP, and several other organizations and offices, it was decided to convene an ad hoc inter-agency meeting on security matters to explore ways of enhancing inter-agency coordination and of ensuring the safety and security of personnel of the system. This was the fifth such meeting on the subject and was held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 10 to 13 June 1991.

114. The ad hoc inter-agency meeting addressed such issues as the security and independence of the international civil service, expenditures relating to inter-organizational security measures, life and accident insurance at

hazardous duty stations, residential security arrangements, developments in emergency communications, evacuation and other allowances and arrangements for local staff. The meeting reviewed, and submitted to ACC for its approval, a revised Field Security Handbook, containing technical information for use by officials directly concerned with security, as well as information of an organizational and administrative nature agreed upon by CCAQ for the administration of entitlements during security emergencies. The provisions of the Field Security Handbook, which were approved by ACC, will be implemented effective 1 January 1992.